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## Canada

**Post:** Ottawa

### **Ontario Government Proposes Farmers' Market Sales for Local Wines**

**Report Categories:**

Beverages

Policy and Program Announcements

Trade Policy Monitoring

Wine

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**Report Highlights:**

On December 16, 2013, Kathleen Wynne, Premier of Ontario, announced a pilot program to allow the sale of certain Ontario produced wines in Farmers' Markets during the summer of 2014. Later in the year, the pilot will be evaluated for possible implementation. This sales channel would not be available to wines produced outside of the province. The Liquor Control Board of Ontario is the largest buyer of wine in Canada.

*Ontario Government Proposes Farmers' Market Sales for Local Wines*  
*Ottawa, Canada*  
*February 2014*

On December 16<sup>th</sup>, 2013, the Government of Ontario announced an initiative to allow the sale of VQA wines at farmers' markets in the province. The announcement was made by Premier Kathleen Wynne, who also serves as the province's Minister of Agriculture and Food as well as the provincial Wine Secretary. The initiative will begin with a pilot program set to begin in the summer of 2014. Initially, only wine will be involved with an evaluation set for the winter of 2015 after which other alcoholic beverages will be considered for inclusion.

VQA stands for [Vintners Quality Alliance](#), which establishes appellations within the province and aims to set standards of quality. It is a certification program and does not market or sell wines. Participation in the program is not mandatory and requires a fee from the member wineries. VQA wines are required to be made only from 100 percent fresh, Ontario grown grapes. The certification applies only to specific wines and not to entire wineries.

Currently in Ontario, wineries are able to conduct on-site sales, which are one of the only ways to sell alcoholic beverages in the province without having to go through the provincial liquor control board, the [Liquor Control Board of Ontario](#) (LCBO). This new initiative would act as an extension of these on-site sales to allow Ontario wineries to sell their products at farmers' markets and no new license would be required.

There are 320 farmers' markets in Ontario. Each market and municipality will be able to choose whether or not to participate in the program. Sales of wines will be allowed to start earlier on respective business days than any other establishments in the province. Procedures for sampling products at farmers' markets are still being determined. Currently, sales channels other than the LCBO are not available to wines produced outside of the province and give locally produced wines an advantage in number of outlets. This proposed farmers' market initiative would further disadvantage non-locally produced and imported wines.

Ontario is by far the largest purchaser of wine in Canada. In CY2013, Ontario imported C\$ 653 million of wine from around the world. The United States was their leading supplier, followed by Italy and France. Sales of Ontario VQA were C\$346 million in 2013, the majority of which occurred through the LCBO (C\$ 116.5 million). Winery Retail Stores were the second largest channel for VQA wine at C\$ 115.8 million. On average, in CY 2013 C\$1 equaled US\$1.03.

More information on this new regulation can be found on the Government of Ontario's website at <http://www.ontariocanada.com/registry/view.do?postingId=15342&language=en>. The government will be accepting comments regarding this change until Friday March 21, 2014. Comments may be submitted by following the link at the bottom of the summary page or via regular mail to:

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